

Borneo deforested 30 percent over past 40 years

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Forest cover in Borneo may have declined by up to 30% over the past 40 years, according to a study published July 16, 2014 in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* by David Gaveau from the Center for International Forestry Research, Indonesia, and colleagues.

The native forests of Borneo have been increasingly impacted by logging, fire, and conversion to plantations since the early 1970s. Borneo lacks island-wide forest clearance and logging documentation, making [forest conservation](#) planning difficult, especially for selectively logged forests that have high conservation potential but are vulnerable to being converted to plantations. To better understand long-term [forest cover](#) and logging patterns, the researchers in this study analyzed LANDSAT satellite images from 1973 to 2010.

The authors found that in the early 1970s, ~75% of Borneo was forested, and from 1973 to 2010, the forest area declined by ~30%, which is nearly twice as fast as a rate compared to the rest of the world's humid tropical forests. The authors also analyzed images of over 270,000 km of logging roads built from 1973 to 2010 and estimated that over 266,000 km² of forest cover has been logged, with [logging](#) reaching increasingly more remote and high-elevation forests over time. Over 389,000 km² of Borneo remains either completely or partially forested, and the authors hope that understanding forest change patterns may aid in future conservation planning, particularly in selectively logged forests.

More information: Gaveau DLA, Sloan S, Molidena E, Yaen H, Sheil

D, et al. (2014) Four Decades of Forest Persistence, Clearance and Logging on Borneo. PLoS ONE 9(7): e101654. [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0101654](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0101654)

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